

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

10/788,497

Applicant(s)

WILLIFORD, GARY M.

Examiner

Zakiya N. Walker

Art Unit

3676

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☐ This communication is responsive to \_\_\_\_.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-18.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☒ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☒ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☒ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_

### EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 7, line 5, the term "second" has been deleted for consistent terminology purposes.

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of record fails to teach, show, or suggest a fluid retaining apparatus (valve) when a tubular is disconnected therefrom comprising in combination a cylinder, piston, spring, and an adjustment ring having external threads selected to be threaded into the second end of said cylinder and to bear against the first end of said spring, wherein said adjustment ring is threaded into the second end of said cylinder against one end of said spring, as specifically called for in at least the most comprehensive independent claim 11. With respect to more limiting independent claims 1, 4, 6, 7, and 16, the prior art of record fails to teach, show, or suggest a fluid retaining apparatus (valve) when a tubular is disconnected therefrom comprising in combination a tubular body being a downwardly extending closure member, an axially movable piston having a flange, a plurality of flow passages, a plurality of check valves, and a compression spring as specifically called for in at least the above-mentioned independent claims.

US 6,487,960 teaches a valve actuator having a piston 120, cylinder 118, and ring 114. However, the reference fails to teach or suggest in combination a cylinder, piston, spring, and an adjustment ring having external threads selected to be threaded into the second end of said cylinder and to bear against the first end of said spring, wherein said adjustment ring is threaded into the second end of said cylinder against one end of said spring, as specifically called for in the claimed combination. The reference further fails to teach a fluid retaining apparatus (valve) when a tubular is disconnected therefrom comprising in combination a tubular body being a downwardly extending closure member, an axially movable piston having a flange, a plurality of flow passages, a plurality of check valves, and a compression spring as specifically called for in the claims.

US 4,768,598 teaches a downhole drilling motor valve having a piston 30, cylinder 20, and springs 37. However, the reference fails to teach or suggest in combination a cylinder, piston, spring, and an adjustment ring having external threads selected to be threaded into the second end of said cylinder and to bear against the first end of said spring, wherein said adjustment ring is threaded into the second end of said cylinder against one end of said spring, as specifically called for in the claimed combination. The reference further fails to teach a fluid retaining apparatus (valve) when a tubular is disconnected therefrom comprising in combination a tubular body being a downwardly extending closure member, an axially movable piston having a flange, a plurality of flow passages, a plurality of check valves, and a compression spring as specifically called for in the claims.

US 3,698,411 teaches a Kelly foot valve having a piston 61, cylinder 21, spring 62, and threaded ring 73. However, the reference fails to teach or suggest in combination a cylinder, piston, spring, and an adjustment ring having external threads selected to be threaded into the second end of said cylinder and to bear against the first end of said spring, wherein said adjustment ring is threaded into the second end of said cylinder against one end of said spring, as specifically called for in the claimed combination. The reference further fails to teach a fluid retaining apparatus (valve) when a tubular is disconnected therefrom comprising in combination a tubular body being a downwardly extending closure member, an axially movable piston having a flange, a plurality of flow passages, a plurality of check valves, and a compression spring as specifically called for in the claims.

US 2001/0042625 teaches an apparatus for the connection of tubulars using a top drive that includes a piston 207, cylinder 204, spring 209, top drive (at 203), and threaded lock ring 208. However, the reference fails to teach or suggest in combination a cylinder, piston, spring, and an adjustment ring having external threads selected to be threaded into the second end of said cylinder and to bear against the first end of said spring, wherein said adjustment ring is threaded into the second end of said cylinder against one end of said spring, as specifically called for in the claimed combination. The reference further fails to teach a fluid retaining apparatus (valve) when a tubular is disconnected therefrom comprising in combination a tubular body being a downwardly extending closure member, an axially movable piston having a flange, a plurality of flow

passages, a plurality of check valves, and a compression spring as specifically called for in the claims.

Therefore, none of the cited references, alone or in combination, fairly teach or suggest the subject matter as claimed.

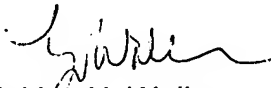
3. It is noted that the applicant cites various prior art in the specification that has not been considered, unless cited on the examiner's pto-892.

4. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Zakiya N. Walker whose telephone number is (571) 272-7039. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM-5 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian Glessner can be reached on (571) 272-6843. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Zakiya N. Walker  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3676

ZW  
September 30, 2005